

The Advocate

AND TOPEKA TRIBUNE.

OFFICIAL STATE PAPER.

N. R. P. A.

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Sixth District Committee.

The People's party central committee of the Sixth district, will meet at Colby, Kansas, March 9, for the purpose of arranging for the congressional convention, and for the transaction of such other business as may come before it.

JOSEPH DARLING, Chairman.

F. C. JOHNSON, Secretary.

THE Alliance may be dead, but what we saw in Topeka last week didn't look very much like a funeral procession.

THIS might be called the National Alliance edition of the ADVOCATE. It could not be devoted to a better organization, though it would contain a greater variety of news if it were larger.

It is seldom that the public takes so much interest in a newspaper story as it is now taking in "The Dead Line," now running in the ADVOCATE. The publishers sincerely hope the readers will be as well pleased with the last chapters of the story as they were with the first.

SAY, you conservative politician, just look back to any period of political agitation and see how ridiculous the conservatives of that time appear now. The defenders of slavery were conservatives; the Tories of the American revolution were conservatives. They all belonged to the "stand-up" crowd of their day, though most of them were ashamed of it before they died.

A COMMON saying among Kansas Populists is that if a man cannot be converted by any other method it is only necessary to get him to read the ADVOCATE, and in many localities the friends of reform are diligently at work circulating the paper. As we cannot answer all their letters at once, we take this means of thanking them for their patriotic work. The ADVOCATE will prove worthy of the efforts put forth in its behalf.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC UTILITIES.

We have frequently called attention to the fact that the very best features of our government-to-day, state and national, are those wherein the management is exclusively under public control. Our postoffice system has been so frequently cited that it is unnecessary now to enlarge upon its methods or its benefits. It is sufficient that every American citizen knows it to be the cheapest, the best managed, and the most efficient institution in the land, and yet it is not owned by individuals or corporations, nor is it conducted by private enterprise. It is a conspicuous object lesson in "paternalism"—so conspicuous that the eyes of the people cannot be diverted from it.

Our public school system is another example of like character. If individualism and private enterprise possesses the superior advantages over public management that they are said to possess, why is not our educational system left to individuals or farmed out to corporations? Why this invasion of the province of the individual by the public? And, is it not strange that the bitterest opponents of "paternalism," those who cry loudest against the policy of government ownership and management of railroads, telegraphs, telephones and other public utilities, interpose no objection to our postoffice and our public school systems? Why is this the case? Is it not because these institutions are too popular to be attacked rather than because these representatives of corporate greed and power would object to their management for private gain? Who believes that if it were possible to transfer the management of the postoffice and the public school systems from public to private hands that the same press that is now bitterest against the public management of other utilities would not rejoice in such a change and speak of it as a relinquishment by the public of functions rightfully belonging to the individual? They refrain from the advocacy of such a change simply because they dare not undertake it. Public sentiment would not now tolerate such an assumption simply because public sentiment is educated upon this subject in the school of experience. But if public management is such a good thing in these instances why should it be so dreaded in other things? Is there an argument that can be advanced against the public ownership and management of railroads and other monopolies that will not apply with equal force to the postoffice and to the public school? Not one.

But we have some other illustrations bearing upon the transportation question that it will be difficult for the apologists of corporate power to harmonize with their theories. We refer to the canals of the state of New York. These great waterways are the property of the state. Not only that, section 100 of the state constitution forbids their sale even by the legislature, and thereby insures them against capture by

conivance of greedy corporations and corrupt legislators.

Section 13 of the statutes relating to canals reads as follows:

In the construction of every canal of which the construction is or shall be authorized by law, the canal commissioners shall have power, and it shall be their duty, to make all such canals, feeders, locks, dams, aqueducts and other works as they shall deem the proper construction of such canals to require; and they shall enter on, and take possession of, and use, all lands, streams and waters, the appropriation of which, for the use of such canals and works, shall in their judgment be necessary.

Section 33 of the statutes provides that the commissioners shall make such rules as they deem reasonable for the navigation of the canals. This duty now devolves upon a superintendent of public works; and under the regulations adopted, any citizen may place a boat upon these canals and engage in the business of transportation.

Ohio and Indiana, and other states, likewise, have state canals, and it would seem to be in order for the exponents of corporate greed to show why, inasmuch as a state may own a canal, it may not also own a railroad. It would also seem to be in order to show why the government of the United States may not construct and own the Nicaragua canal instead of donating the money for its construction to a corporation and then permitting the corporation to own it, and use it ever afterwards as an instrument of public plunder. The intensity of the opposition of the great dailies to such a policy in the face of such facts as we have presented, affords ground of suspicion that they are not acting altogether from unselfish motives.

We hold that public ownership of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and all other utilities now monopolized or susceptible of being monopolized for private gain at the expense of the people, would inure to the benefit of the people, and that it is therefore the duty of the government in execution of the constitutional obligation to provide for the public welfare to assume the ownership and management of all such utilities and monopolies in the interest of the public. We have cited some of the examples of public ownership and management showing clearly their advantages; and it would therefore appear to be in order for those who oppose an extension of this policy to give some reason for their opposition, or confess that they have no reason and forever afterwards hold their peace. The real reason for all this opposition is found in the profits of monopolies, and it is fair to presume that the bitterness of the press in this opposition, in the face of the advantages and benefits to the people of public ownership and management, is inspired by a participation in those profits. Until they present better arguments against this policy than they ever have done they will fail to convince the people that this presumption is not well founded.

The United States steamer Kearsarge, famous for having ended the career of the Alabama during the civil war, was wrecked off the coast of Central America on February 2.

NOTES AND COMMENT.

A bill to grant women a right to vote in school elections is on a fair way to pass the Iowa legislature.

Senator Wolcott has offered a resolution providing for the submission of the constitutional amendment prohibiting the states from denying suffrage to any person on account of sex.

Bland's latest production, the seigniorage bill, is not meeting with any startling degree of success so far. The first motion to consider it in committee of the whole was defeated by a vote of 166 to 6.

As will be seen by reference to the syllabus in this issue, in the case of Mary E. Lease vs. J. W. Freeborn, the supreme court decided in favor of the plaintiff. The gist of the decision is that a member of the board of charities cannot be removed by the governor without cause and without notice. It is now a question whether anybody wishes to prefer charges to remove the incumbent.

The recent decisions of Judge Dundy, the railroad lawyer who presides over the United States court at Omaha, have been the means of raising a question which has startled railroad people and made some of them think that jurisdiction in railroad matters has been carried too far. Since the judge decided that employees of a road in United States receiver's hands are government employees and, therefore, not at liberty to quit without the consent of the court, the employees of the Union Pacific have inquired why they should not be put on the eight hour schedule along with other government employees, as the law provides. The question is said to have been first raised by Eugene Debs, the author of an article in this paper.

A funny incident about a serious matter occurred last week. A dispatch from Nashville, Tenn., announced that John J. Ingalls, who was lecturing there, had been converted to Christianity at Rev. Sam Jones' revival. Next morning a dispatch from Atchison, Mr. Ingalls' home, declared the other report a canard, giving Mrs. Ingalls as authority that the ex-senator was already a member of the Episcopal church and therefore not in need of conversion. The ridiculousness of this denial must have struck the public very forcibly. Since Mr. Ingalls has frequently changed his mind regarding political questions, there is no good reason why he should not have taken a religious flop also. Yet the report may have been false.

The latest sensation caused by that dirty class of scandal mongers who are always accusing and seldom proving their charges, has resulted in the arrest of J. A. Smith, of Kansas City, better known there as Dugface Smith. A few days ago he reiterated the charges of corruption made against the state administration, making it more specific by saying that Governor Lewelling, Police Judge King, of Kansas City, W. W. Atkins and others had accepted bribes from the gamblers of Kansas City to permit them to carry on their business. These charges he put in writing and through Mrs. Lease they were conveyed to the Topeka Capital, in which they were published after several other daily papers had refused to touch them, owing to the bad reputation of the author. The Kansas City contingent of the accused at once caused the arrest of Smith on a charge of criminal libel and he is now awaiting trial.

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